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SUBJECT: UN HOST COUNTRY COMMITTEE MEETING OCTOBER 5, 2007

¶1. (U) The 19-member UN Committee on Relations with the Host Country held its 234th meeting on October 5, 2007. USUN Counselor for Host Country Affairs represented the United States. Over a dozen non-Committee Member States participated as observers. There were no requests for specific items to be placed on the agenda prior to the meeting.

Sudan FM delayed on arrival at JFK

¶2. (U) Sudan MUN complained that on September 20, its Foreign Minister, Lam Akol Ajawin, was detained upon arrival at JFK airport in a private room for secondary screening for about thirty minutes. Sudan alleged that it had taken the necessary steps to inform the United States regarding the FM's arrival. USUN Host Country Counselor informed the Committee that this was the first time Host Country had heard of the incident, that USUN would look into the matter, and that it would have been helpful if Sudan had informed the US Mission when the incident occurred rather than wait until the next scheduled meeting of the Host Country Committee. As Sudan's complaint was the only one raised at the meeting, USUN Host Country Counselor noted that it spoke well for the Host Country to have only one formal complaint before the Committee, given the large number of Heads of State/Heads of Government, Ministers, VIPs, their families and entourages that came for the opening of the UNGA over the past two weeks.

¶3. (U) Comment: USUN has no record of Sudan communicating a request for the FM's arrival to USUN. In USUN's briefing delegations, USUN strongly cautioned against MUNs submitting requests that bypassed USUN, and that any requests that Missions submitted directly to Washington or through a country's embassy in Washington needed to be sent also to USUN so that USUN could monitor and follow up on the request, as needed.

Gasoline tax exemptions in New York

13. (U) Italy MUN requested clarification about a letter it received from the Office of Foreign Missions/NY regarding changes in gasoline tax exemptions in New York for diplomats. The letter informed the Mission that tax exemptions would no longer automatically be given to individuals using oil company credit cards due to the companies' interpretation of a recent NY tax law ruling. USUN Host Country Counselor informed the Committee that two representatives from OFM/NY were present and could answer specific questions relating to this matter after the meeting ended. He also suggested that while the issue was being resolved, Missions should retain their gasoline receipts.

UN compliance with fire code

14. Committee Chair Mavroyiannis (Cyprus) briefed the Committee on his meeting with Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon to discuss the UN compliance with NY City fire codes. The Secretary-General assured the Chairman that he had been following the issue closely and the matter would be resolved as expeditiously as possible ensuring the highest degree of safety and security possible as the Capital Master Plan is implemented.

New Committee Vice-Chair; next Committee meeting

15. Guillarme Bailly-Niagri, Counselor at the Cote d'Ivoire Mission, was elected to replace Coe d'Ivoire MUN's Marc Banny as Vice-Chairman of the Committee. The next HCC meeting will be held on October 31 to adopt the as-yet-unwritten annual Report of the Committee before it is forwarded for adoption by the Sixth Committee and then the GA.

KHALILZAD